



SENATE AGRICULTURE

EXHIBIT NO. 3DATE 3-5-13BILL NO. HB 323

Montana Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife

P O Box 2243

Missoula, MT 59806

HB 323

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee,

My name is Bill Mitchell. I represent Montana Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife. We support this bill.

At MTSFW, we look at this bill as not assisting the livestock industry but as helping our fellow Montanans, neighbors and friends. We tend to overlook the fact that livestock owners are not some giant corporation, but more often just a family making a living doing what they love in Montana for generations. Livestock owners are an irreplaceable part of the economy of Montana. These livestock owners are the true conservationists. They work with nature and become stewards of the land and by being stewards of the land they create habitat that is essential to the public wildlife. At MTSFW, we realize how essential livestock producers are to the public wildlife of Montana. We also realize there is a cost to having public wildlife on private land. This includes fence damage, reduced grazing, reduced crop production and a long list of damage resulting from wildlife. Livestock owners realize this and know it is part of being a steward of the land and doing business.

Depredations is another matter as it is a measurable number. When livestock owners create this invaluable habitat, it comes with prey and predators. Grizzlies are one of these predators that are becoming more prevalent on the landscape and if a loss occurs due to this predator, compensation is justifiable.

Montana Sportsman for Fish and Wildlife support HB 323 because it is a measurable loss of private property by public wildlife. Also the fact we need to keep our livestock owners in Montana viable which in turn preserves our public wildlife.